

Gambling Bill Would Bring World’s Biggest Casinos to Florida

*Malaysian Conglomerate’s Proposed Casino Alone Would be Bigger than
 Six of the Biggest Casinos on the Las Vegas Strip COMBINED*

Tallahassee, Fla. — Promoters of legalizing high-stakes casino gambling throughout Florida are at it again. They make a lot of promises. They tell voters that their plans are limited. And they say that if we approve a limited number of casinos, no more will follow. However, the history of gambling in Florida (and the facts of their current proposal) tells a different story.

The bill is not out yet, but some of the details have come to light, so it’s time to separate the myths about the bill, being introduced by Senator Ellyn Bogdanoff and Representative Erik Fresen, from the facts...

Myth...	Fact...
The bill would create just 3 Las Vegas style-casinos in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties – that’s it...	<p>The history of gambling proves that every time gambling interests have been given an inch, they take a mile. If the bill passes, competing gambling interests outside of Dade and Broward will press for more gambling and new gambling tax breaks. This will lead to high-stakes casino gambling in many communities in Florida. In fact, gambling promoters in Pinellas, Lee and Volusia counties are already saying that if the bill passes, they want to be able to operate casinos, too.</p> <p>In 2004, Florida voters were promised that if they passed the slots amendment there would only be slot machines at “7 existing facilities in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.” A recent court decision on the matter has added an 8th facility and opened the doors for the legislature to legalize casino gambling across Florida.</p>
The bill carefully limits the scale of casino gambling by requiring that the casino occupy no more than 10% of the entire development...	<p>The “sleight of hand” is one of the casino promoter’s best tricks. The fact is the bill would put the biggest casinos in the world right here in Florida. In fact, the casino proposed by Malaysian gambling conglomerate <i>Genting</i> would be nearly <u>double</u> the size of the largest casino in the world. In fact, even if Genting limits the casino size to 8 percent of their development, that Miami casino would be big enough to house six modern marquee casinos on the Las Vegas Strip – with room to spare! The Genting casino alone would comfortably fit the casinos of the MGM Grand, the Wynn, the Mirage, the Bellagio, Caesar’s Palace and the Venetian. If 3 casinos of this size are built, Florida would have as much casino gambling as 20 or more casinos on the Las Vegas strip – and all the money would be in the hands of just 3 companies.</p>
Legalizing casino gambling will create tens of	Most economic studies that make big jobs claims are paid for by the casino industry. The fact is that when casinos are introduced into a

<p>thousands of new jobs in Florida...</p>	<p>developed economy like ours, they do little more than cannibalize existing jobs and businesses. Despite industry claims, most gamblers would be Floridians or tourists who are already coming here – so money put in a slot machine or on a blackjack table is money not spent in a local restaurant, entertainment complex, movie theatre, night club, or some other sector of Florida’s economy.</p> <p>That’s why 40 percent of the restaurants and one third of the retail establishments in Atlantic City went out of business within one year of the casinos opening. Most “success stories” spouted by gambling interests derive from places that have little in common with Florida – like Las Vegas and the Mississippi Gulf Coast – where virtually no commerce existed before the introduction of casinos. But in developed economies like Florida’s, gains in the casino gambling industry have come at the expense of existing jobs and businesses.</p>
<p>Legalizing casino gambling will generate new tax revenue to meet important state needs...</p>	<p>Floridians have heard this one before. It started with the broken promise of the lottery. Everyone knows that story. But the story continues. In fact, the last time voters trusted gambling interests, they were promised \$500 million per year for schools from taxes on slot machines in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. Promoters even signed a contract, saying that if the legislature did not tax slot machines, they would cut a check directly to the school boards. So far, they have generated a paltry 20 percent of this figure – and recently they successfully lobbied the legislature for a 30 percent reduction in their tax rate. Like the lottery, another promise broken.</p> <p>Studies paid for by the gambling industry that promise big payoffs for the state fail to take into account the economic and social costs of expanded gambling that must be borne by taxpayers. These costs include: revenue offsets for taxable money spent in a casino that is not spent in another sector of the economy, the cost of regulation, the cost of additional law enforcement, and the cost of counseling, treatment and support for families of addicted gamblers.</p> <p>When all of these costs are calculated and subtracted from revenues, gambling ends up being a net loss for taxpayers.</p>
<p>Casinos pay higher taxes than other businesses...</p>	<p>These taxes don’t keep up with the costs listed above AND the bill establishes one of the lowest tax rates on gambling anywhere in America. Slot machines in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties were originally taxed at 50 percent. That figure was recently reduced to 35 percent. The bill would allow the new mega-casinos to pay a tax rate of just 10 percent. IN FACT, one of the costs of the bill will be the eventual or immediate reduction in taxes on other gambling interests, which will use their political muscle to lobby for tax parity.</p>